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ABSTRACT

Based on official reports, newspapers, the memories of citizens, and historical studies, a description of Gary, Indiana during the Great Depression shows how many people in Gary were affected by the Depression. Gary began to grow rapidly beginning in 1906 with the organization of two steel companies. Black, European, and Mexican immigrants came to Gary to get jobs in the steel mills. A brief introduction about the effects of the Great Depression on the national economy precedes the specifics of Gary in the Depression. An illustration provides an example of the cycle of an economic depression. Gary responded through private relief agencies, business and industry, the Red Cross, and other work relief. The Mexican workers were among the first to be fired when mill production dropped. Anger and resentment built and a real movement began in Gary in 1932 to remove all Mexican immigrants to Mexico for repatriation. A timeline gives some historical context through use of local, state, and national events in the early years. Musical excerpts add another part of the cultural picture. A crossword puzzle using the Great Depression as a theme precedes selected resources for student reading, general sources, and special interest. (CK)

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ED 368 652

DREAMS AND DESPAIR

THE EARLY YEARS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION IN GARY, INDIANA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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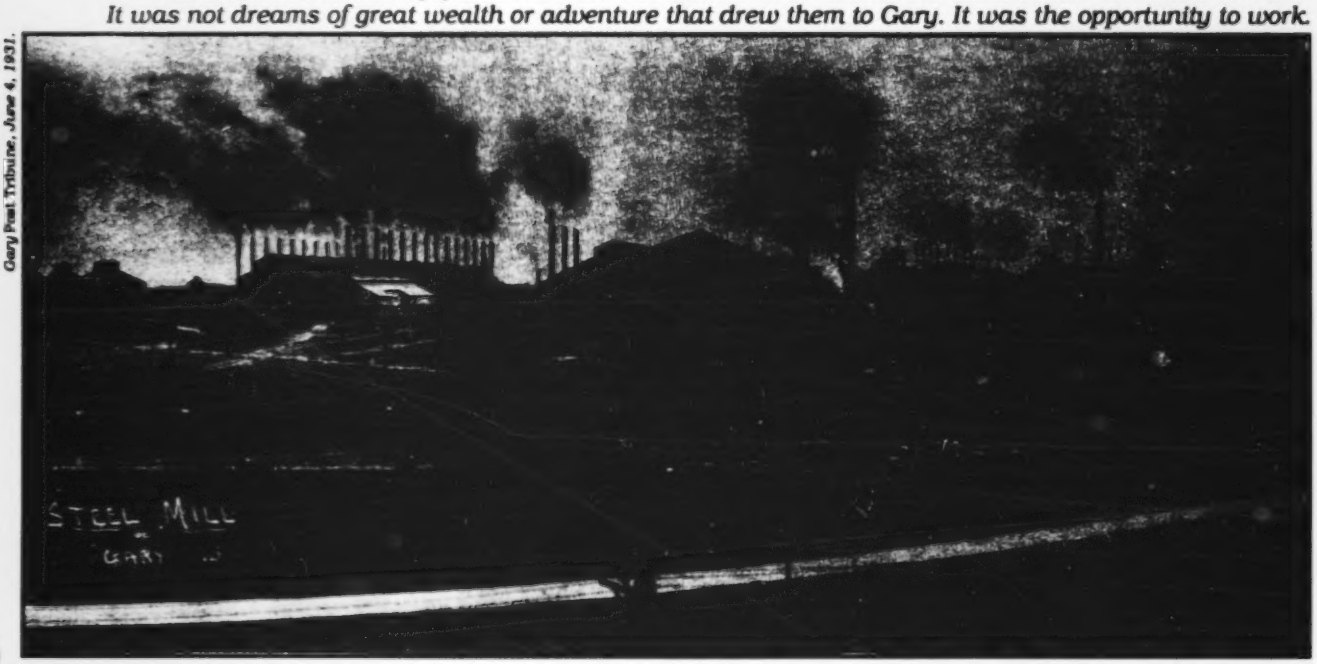
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

To the thousands of people who migrated to the Gary area during the early 1900s, the black smoke rising from the blast furnaces beckoned with promise. Immigrants arrived from Europe. Blacks and whites left farms, towns, and cities in the United States. Mexicans were drawn north. It was not dreams of great wealth or adventure that drew them to Gary. It was the opportunity to work.



Gary Post Tribune, June 6, 1931.

SO 023 843

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Focus

In answer to many requests, this issue focuses on the so-called Great Depression. The Great Depression is a relatively recent event; many people still living experienced the hardships of that time. Senior citizens in your area can provide you with their memories. Your local newspapers and local records in the courthouse, library, or historical organization can provide insights about this time in your area.

We have selected Gary, Indiana for emphasis since it was one of the hardest hit areas in the United States during the Depression.

We have dealt with Gary in the early years primarily—from 1929 through 1932. The changes after Franklin D. Roosevelt became president in 1933 are another story.

We have structured the issue to show how many of the people in Gary were affected by the Depression. You will find, if you investigate further, that some people's lives remained relatively comfortable. Most people, however, experienced problems, and many people experienced extreme hardships.

Economic depressions are not new. There have been depressions throughout history. In a depression, the economy declines; there is less business activity, falling prices, and unemployment.

The Great Depression, however, lives up to the name that has been given to it by historians. It occurred worldwide roughly from 1929 to 1940 or 1941. Historians continue to study and interpret the causes and the results. One result, however, was an expanded role for the United States government that continues today.

This issue does not try to explain the Depression; it is much too complex. This issue does present an interpretation of Gary's experience, based on official reports, newspapers, the memories of citizens, and historical studies.

We provide some background on Gary and some of its peoples. We provide a brief introduction to the effect of a depression on the economy.

We then show how the early stages of the Great Depression affected Gary and its peoples. There are examples of great hardship; there are also examples of how people work together in an emergency.

On page 13, "The Rhythm of Time" has two purposes. The timeline provides some historical context using local, state, and national events in these early years. The music provides another part of the cultural picture. How does music reflect our society today? The crossword puzzle on page 14 allows you to demonstrate your knowledge of the Depression. The Apple on page 15, as usual, provides resources for students and adults who are interested in more information.

Calumet Regional Archives.

Housing construction along Harrison Street north of Seventh Avenue in Gary, December 19, 1906.

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How Did Gary Begin?

"Indiana's Last Frontier" was the description historian Powell Moore gave the northwestern corner of Indiana. Drained by the Grand Calumet and Little Calumet Rivers, the area is also known as the Calumet Region.

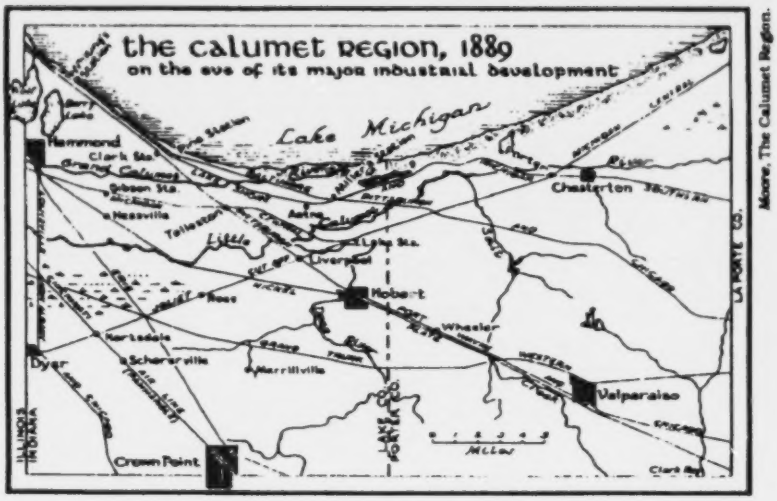
In the late nineteenth century, the land where the city of Gary is today was a private club serving many of Chicago's wealthiest men. Only an hour from Chicago by railroad, the club provided facilities for hunting, trapping, and fishing along the sparsely populated and undeveloped shoreline and dunes of Lake Michigan.

By 1915, some of the dunes and marshes had been filled in, and the city of Gary (only nine years old) was described as "the greatest single calculated achievement of the nation's steel industry."

The transformation of this area began in 1905 when the United States Steel Corporation quietly began purchasing land to build new steel mills. Requirements for the new site included sufficient space for future expansion, location near Lake Michigan, and adequate rail transportation. The future site of Gary provided all of these.

In 1906, U. S. Steel organized two companies: the Indiana Steel Company to build and operate the new mills and the Gary Land Company to plat and build a town to house company employees. Elbert H. Gary was the chairman of the board of directors of U.S. Steel Co.

The town grew quickly as laborers from all over the world came to build the mills. The Gary Land Company was not prepared to handle the housing needs for all the new workers. Private real estate developers built and promoted boarding houses south of the U.S. Steel holdings. That housing quickly became overcrowded, forming unhealthy ghettos for the thousands of immigrants.



Moore, The Calumet Region.

After the first steel mills opened in 1909, U.S. Steel continued to expand. Soon, related industries (like American Bridge Co., American Sheet and Tin Plate Co., National Tube Co., American Steel and Wire Co., American Car and Foundry Co., and American Locomotive Co.) drew more immigrant workers to Gary. World War I brought a great demand for steel. The war all but stopped foreign immigration.

Soon, southern black immigrants and Mexican immigrants began to fill the need for more workers. By 1930, 17 percent of Gary's population was black. Gary's largest ethnic groups included Poles, Slovaks, Serbians, Croatians, Italians, Greeks, Russians, and Hungarians.

Sources: Lane, City of the Century; *Moore,* The Calumet Region; *Mohl and Betten,* Steel City.

You be the historian!

- What is Gary like today?
- What kinds of jobs are there in Gary today? Who holds them?
- Answer these questions about your own town or area.

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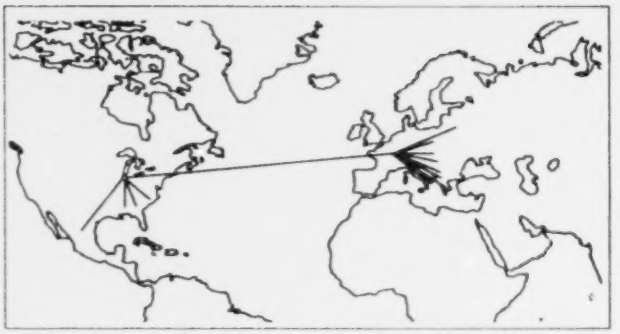
Who Came to Gary?



The majority of people came to Gary from Europe, Mexico, and the southern United States. Most left lives of poverty and hardship. They often left their families, too. They wanted to get jobs in the mills. A good job meant money. Money meant security, and a better way of life.

The harsh realities of life in the "steel city" quickly set in. Immigrants faced discrimination. They were segregated to the south side. Most spoke little or no English, and ethnic groups banded together to form their own neighborhoods.

There were jobs, but they consisted of back-breaking, dangerous work with twelve-hour days, seven-day weeks, and meager wages. In the early 1900s, chances for advancement to management positions seemed a long way off for European immigrants. For blacks and Mexicans, advancement seemed impossible.

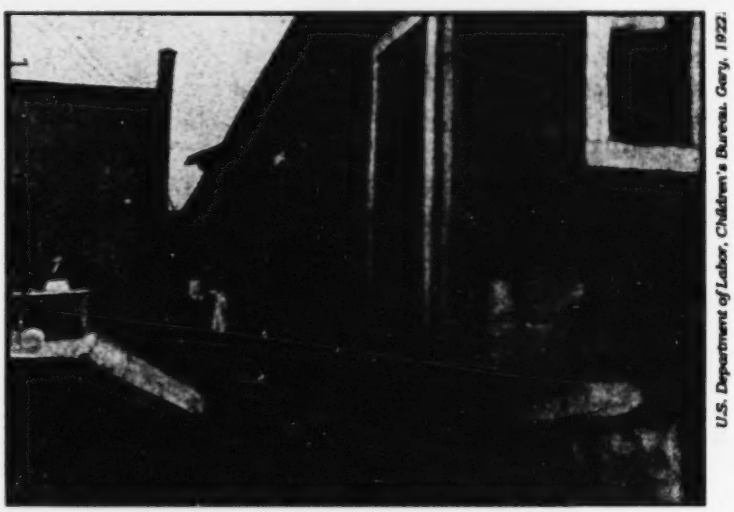
Housing was cheaply made and severely overcrowded, but rents were high. Most homes had no running water, and families shared pumps and outhouses. As populations grew, so did squalor, disease, and crime. The poverty that immigrants had tried to leave behind, gripped them just as tightly. Now, however, they were in a strange place, and far from homes and families.

Source: *Mohl and Betten*, Steel City.

European Immigrants

By 1920, there were 16,460 European immigrants living in Gary. The majority came from southern and eastern Europe. Italians, Hungarians, Croatians, Turks, Greeks, and Russians are some of the 52 nationalities that had migrated to the "steel city."

There was an effort, on the part of the steel industry and the city fathers, to Americanize the European immigrants. The most logical way to accomplish this Americanization was through the schools. Immigrant children were not the only ones to attend school. At times, more adults were attending night school English classes than there were regular students during the day. Schools became social and recreational centers that introduced immigrant families to American values, standards, and ways of life.



U.S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, Gary, 1922.

A nine-family tenement with outhouse at the end of the row.

Pressured to adopt American urban life and culture, immigrants found the adjustment difficult. One organization, the Gary International Institute, founded in 1919, encouraged immigrants to retain their ethnic diversity by keeping their cultural traditions alive.

With each generation, however, European immigrants became more "American." The discrimination that they had first encountered slowly began to decrease.

Source: *Mohl and Betten*, Steel City.

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Black Immigrants

Blacks, like so many other immigrants, believed that there was a bright future in the North. Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Alabama experienced the greatest exit of black residents. In Gary, the promise of a new life was spoiled by continued segregation and discrimination. Blacks were forced to live on the south side in an area called the "Patch." Poverty was staggering, and living conditions were wretched.

From the mills where they worked, to the stores where they shopped, blacks experienced racial discrimination. The school board, headed by U.S. Steel officials, kept black students segregated. The south side schools were overcrowded and inferior to the white schools.

Blacks were given the worst, most dangerous, and lowest paying jobs at the mills. According to information gathered by Edward Anderson, a student at Indiana University Northwest, quoted in *Steel Shavings*, mill work was brutal:

"Blacks in the area steel mills were generally the 'last hired and first fired' and were to be found, so to speak, at the bottom of the totem pole. They seemed to get only those dirty jobs that nobody else wanted. For example, when the blast furnaces were shut down, blacks were sent inside to throw out the damaged bricks of the furnace before it had been allowed to cool thoroughly. The workers would stand on a board to keep their feet from burning up, but the temperature was often hot enough to set the board aflame. Workers stayed inside the blast furnace as long as they could stand it, and then a new crew went in and the process was repeated over and over."

Source: Mohl and Betten, Steel City.

U.S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, Gary, 1922

A passageway, three feet wide between two frame shacks. A single water faucet and four outhouses served twelve families.

Mexican Immigrants

Mexicans migrated in large numbers to the United States for many reasons during the early 1900s. The 1910 Mexican Revolution drove many from their homes; Mexicans would work long hours for little pay; the growing industrial cities of the north needed labor; World War I military needs decreased the available workforce; and in 1920, there was a restriction on European immigrants, decreasing competition for jobs.

Thousands of young, single males, with the promise of jobs and money, said goodbye to their families and headed north. By 1930, 9,007 Mexican-born immigrants were living in Lake County; 3,486 of them lived in Gary.

Mexicans were disliked by many in the white community. Many considered them to be troublemakers. They were subject to regular police harassment and experienced discrimination in housing and other aspects of their lives.

Despite these hardships, Mexicans built their own community on the south side during the 1920s. In 1924, the Roman Catholic Church granted them their own parish, Our Lady of Guadalupe. By 1928, there were 27 Mexican businesses in Gary: restaurants, barber and tailor shops, pool halls, and a grocery. Social clubs were formed, and there were athletic, educational, and patriotic activities.

Source: Mohl and Betten, Steel City.

You be the historian!

- Is Gary still a highly diversified ethnic area? If so, are the ethnic groups the same as in 1930?
- Does your community or area have an ethnically diverse population? Can you locate specific reasons why or why not in your local history?

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What Is the Great Depression?

In August 1993, the federal government recorded approximately 128,370,000 people in the national labor force. Workers were 66.2 percent of the total population. Of those workers, 8,661,000 were unemployed, a total of 6.7 percent.

Today, local, state, and federal governments provide numerous assistance programs to help feed, clothe, and re-educate unemployed workers in the United States. As recently as the 1930s, however, the United States was one of the few industrialized nations which offered no assistance to help the unemployed. The Great Depression changed all that!

The 1920s were fabulous good times—we've been told! American workers built new homes, and electrified old ones. They produced automobiles, radios, and other items, cheaply enough to be affordable by almost anyone. Especially with the newly popular installment (credit) plan, Americans could buy! American workers and American farmers, aided by newly developed technology, produced more and more goods and food items.

Soon, however, there were more goods and food than there were buyers to purchase them. Businesses cut back production; farmers could not sell their crops. Some farmers in the West suffered from severe drought and had no crops to sell. More and more people lost their jobs. Fewer and fewer people could afford to buy manufactured goods or food.

The Great Depression, as it is now called, had arrived. All over the world, the Great Depression produced distress and misery. Industrial areas were often the hardest hit. Local agencies and charities, which provided food, clothing, shelter, and medical care to the needy, were pushed to the limits of their resources. In drought-stricken regions, especially, farmers and their families suffered also.

Federal government records show a clear pattern of increasing unemployment in the U.S. In 1929, the unemployment rate was 3.2 percent; in 1930, 8.7 percent; in 1931, 15.9 percent; in 1932, 23.6 percent; and in 1933, the highest-ever unemployment at 24.9 percent.

Many people blamed big businesses for their suffering. Many called for a return to the "old values" of community and sharing. Many people from all walks of life believed that government should give money directly to the unemployed.

Herbert Hoover was president of the United States at the beginning of these hard times. As local government agencies and charities across America ran out of money and resources, President Hoover pushed the federal government into a new role. Hoover explained this new role in a speech he delivered in Indianapolis on June 16, 1931:

"We have reversed the traditional policy in depressions of reducing expenditures upon construction work. We are maintaining a steady expansion of ultimately needed construction work in co-operation with the state, municipalities, and industries. Over two billions of dollars is being expended, and today a million men are being given direct and indirect employment through these enlarged activities. We have sustained the people in twenty-one states who faced dire disaster from the drought. . . . We are rigidly excluding immigration until our own people are employed. . . . We are maintaining and will maintain systematic voluntary organization in the community in aid of employment and care for distress."

President Hoover believed that when loss of jobs destroyed confidence and when local resources were gone, the federal government had a responsibility to help workers' and businessmen's families. Hoover and others felt strongly, however, that giving money directly to the unemployed was not good policy because it eventually robbed them of a desire to work.

Hoover's limited federal programs could not keep enough men working or enough banks from closing. The election of 1932 pitted Hoover against the relatively unknown governor of New York, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt promised a "New Deal" for the disheartened American public and was easily elected president.

Sources: Garraty, The Great Depression; *McElvaine,* The Great Depression; *Madison,* Indiana through Tradition and Change; *Robert H. Zieger,* American Workers, American Unions, 1920-1985 *(Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics,* Employment and Earnings *(Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, September, 1993); Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census,* Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Part 1 *(Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1975); Indianapolis News, June 16, 1931, p.12.*

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Gary in the Depression

Gary was hit hard during the Great Depression. In 1929, United States Steel employed 254,495 people. By 1932, only 164,348 were still employed; 90,147 people lost their jobs, in only one industry!

Look carefully at the diagram below. Gary's industries were interrelated and dependent upon each other. Industry depended upon both national and international consumers. The automobile industry provides one example of what happens when consumers no longer have money to buy automobiles.

When people lost their jobs, they lost their incomes. As banks failed, many people also lost their savings. How were they to pay the rent and buy clothes and food?

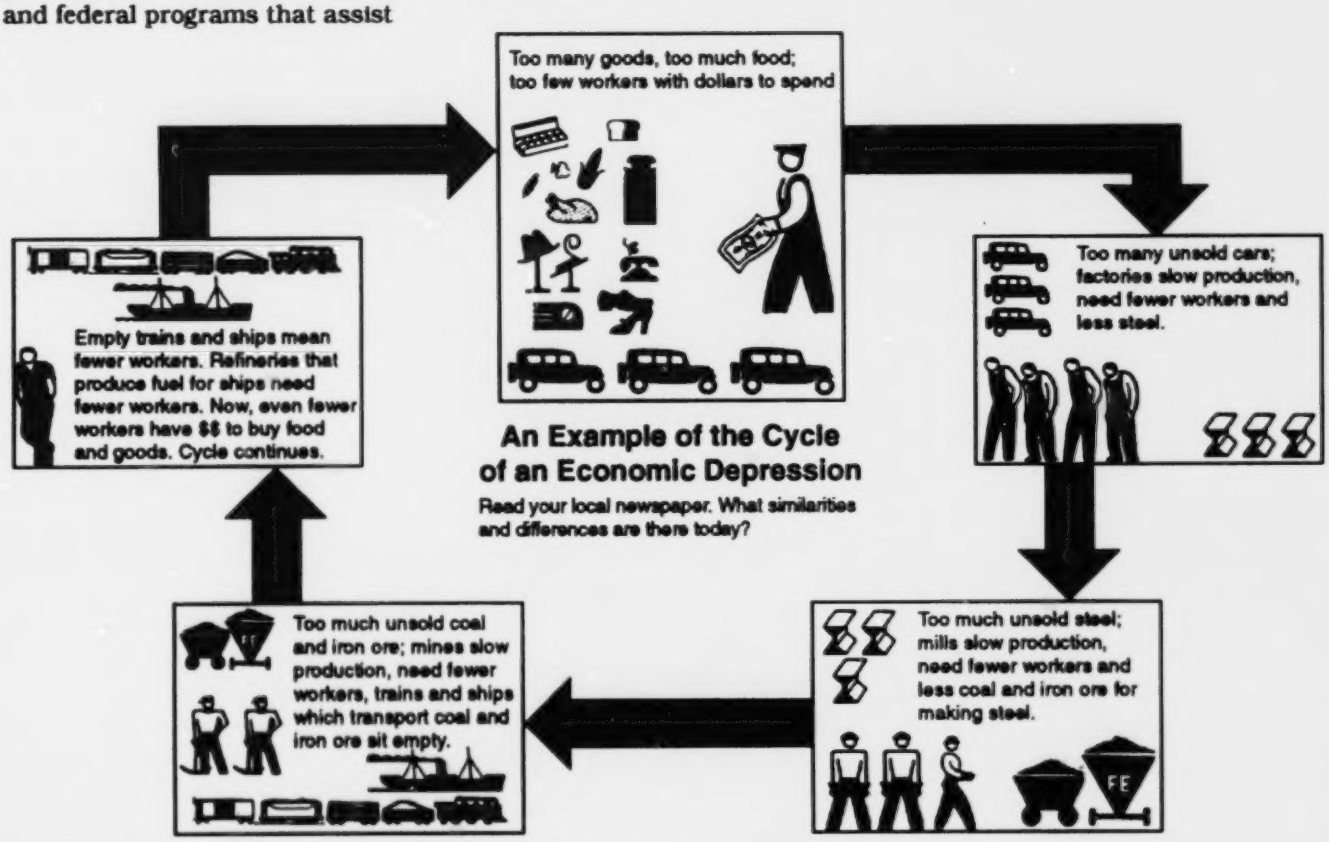
What would happen to your family if your parents lost their jobs? Today, we have local, state, and federal programs that assist families during times of unemployment.

In those first dark years of the Depression, the township trustee was responsible for providing help to those who needed it. Churches and other private organizations provided some relief to the poor. No one was prepared, however, for the massive relief efforts required during the Great Depression.

Sources: Mohl and Betten, Steel City, *and* Steel Shavings, *Vol. 3 (1977).*

"There were so many hungry, scared people walking the streets of Gary then. They were everywhere. Little children would be outside playing, and you could just tell they were hungry. Crowds of men would be standing on the street corner. They all had the same look about them, like they didn't know what was going on, and there was nothing they could do about it."

Rose Bud Cruse, Gary resident, quoted in *Steel Shavings.*


Too many goods, too much food; too few workers with dollars to spend
Too many unsold cars; factories slow production, need fewer workers and less steel.
Too much unsold steel; mills slow production, need fewer workers and less coal and iron ore for making steel.
Too much unsold coal and iron ore; mines slow production, need fewer workers, trains and ships which transport coal and iron ore sit empty.
Empty trains and ships mean fewer workers. Refineries that produce fuel for ships need fewer workers. Now, even fewer workers have $$ to buy food and goods. Cycle continues.

An Example of the Cycle of an Economic Depression

Read your local newspaper. What similarities and differences are there today?

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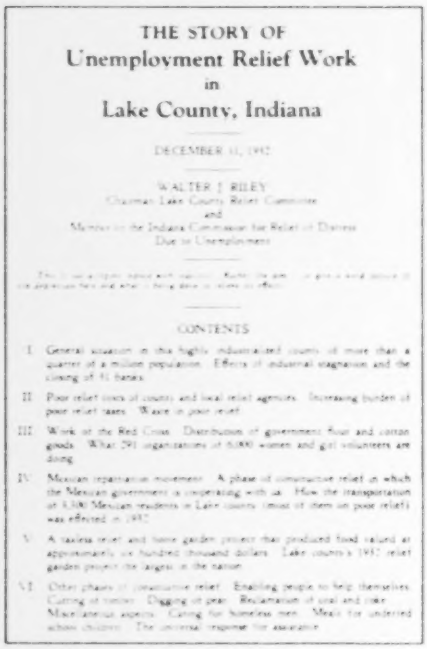
How Did Gary Respond in the Early Years?



THE STORY OF
Unemployment Relief Work
in
Lake County, Indiana

DECEMBER 31, 1932

WALTER J. RILEY
Chairman Lake County Relief Committee
and
Member of the Indiana Commission for Relief of Distress
Due to Unemployment

CONTENTS

I. General situation in this highly industrialized county of more than a quarter of a million population. Effects of industrial stagnation and the closing of 31 banks.

II. Poor relief costs of county and local relief agencies. Increasing burden of poor relief taxes. Waste in poor relief.

III. Work of the Red Cross. Distribution of government flour and cotton goods. What 291 organizations of 6,000 women and girl volunteers are doing.

IV. Mexican repatriation movement. A phase of constructive relief in which the Mexican government is cooperating with us. How the transportation of 1,500 Mexican residents in Lake county (most of them on poor relief) was effected in 1932.

V. A tax-free relief and home garden project that produced food valued at approximately six hundred thousand dollars. Lake county's 1932 relief garden project the largest in the nation.

VI. Other phases of constructive relief. Enabling people to help themselves. Cutting of cordwood. Digging of peat. Reclamation of land and lake. Miscellaneous aspects. Caring for homeless men. Meals for undernourished school children. The universal response for assistance.

All graphs and charts, pp. 8-10, are from this book.

Lake County in 1932

Walter J. Riley, chairman of the Lake County Relief Committee gave the following assessment of conditions in Lake County in a December 31, 1932 publication, *The Story of Unemployment Relief Work in Lake County, Indiana:*

". . . This populous and intensely mechanized district, with industrial operations at low ebb, has been afflicted with an unemployment problem of unprecedented severity.

"The depression here has been further aggravated by the failure, since 1930, of 31 banks in the county, which have frozen the savings of thousands of people. This widespread closing of banks, due chiefly to long, continued complete or partial unemployment and greatly diminished payrolls, has also impaired the financial standing of the various units of government, county, township, school, city and town. The county treasury alone has had approximately one million dollars tied up in closed banks."

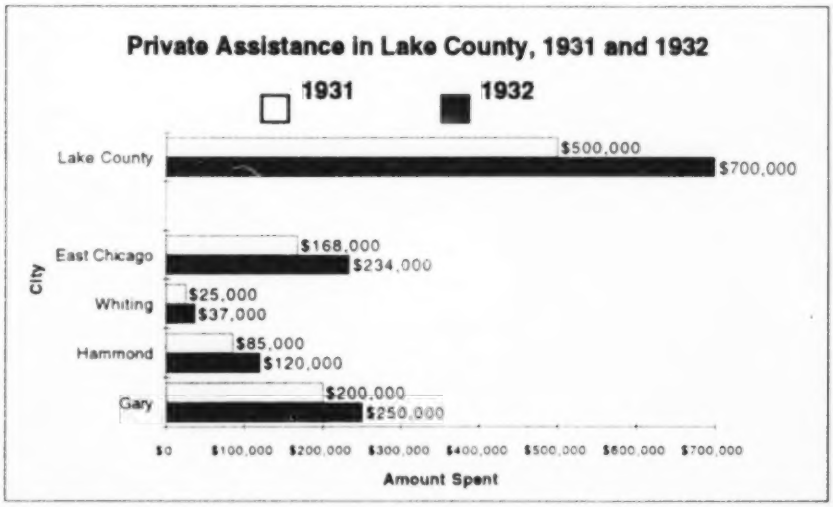
Private Relief Agencies

Private relief and welfare agencies such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Community Chest, churches, etc. provided much needed relief to thousands of families. Approximately one third of the relief funds in Lake County in 1932 ($2,100,000) came from private sources.

Private funds needed in 1932 increased by 40 percent over 1931 needs. Many agencies had to close their doors because they simply ran out of money.

"The Salvation Army also helped families of infants by giving mothers tickets to obtain at least a pint of milk per child each week, plus 2 pounds of potatoes and a head of lettuce."

Frank King, Gary resident, quoted in *Steel Shavings.*



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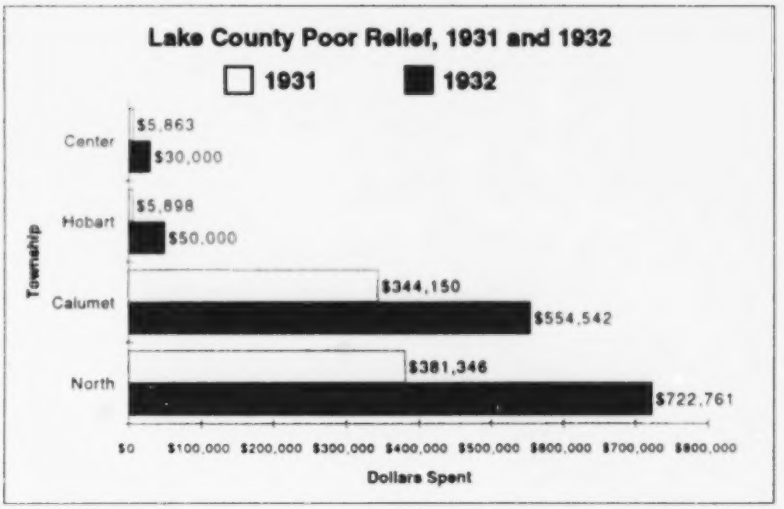
Business and Industry Do Their Parts

The business community played a role in helping the unemployed. In 1930, employees of a Gary retail store agreed to donate one day's pay a month for four months; the company matched donations dollar for dollar. The money was used to buy fuel and food for the unemployed. In 1931, Gary's city workers donated the same. Teachers' associations and schools donated money raised from sporting events and musicals. Soup kitchens were organized.

The larger industries made substantial contributions. One project in particular was very successful in Lake County—the industrial and community gardens. Industries provided land for over 5,000 gardens. There were 20,000 private gardens. It is estimated that 35,000 of the unemployed grew vegetables for their own use. The surplus was canned and otherwise preserved for winter use.

Riley summarized the business and industry efforts as follows:

"Industrial Goodfellowship clubs, supported principally by industries and in some cases partly by working employe[e]s, have done a splendid job of relief for families of employe[e]s requiring assistance. Their help has saved taxpayers thousands of dollars weekly. Space is not available to list the various railroads, utilities, industries and business houses and their employe[e]s that are engaged in rendering assistance to the unemployed."



County Relief Costs

The chart above shows the poor relief expenditures by township for 1931 and 1932. Expenditures were greater than tax revenues for poor relief.

"The area where Indiana University Northwest was built was all weeds, and the city paid youths to clear it so that the land could be divided among families to grow crops."

Mother of Frank King, Gary resident, quoted in *Steel Shavings*.

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Cotton for Clothing

The American Red Cross enlisted 6,000 women and girls from churches, schools, and social organizations to sew clothing for the needy. Cotton was furnished by the federal government and sewn into clothing on machines loaned by garment manufacturers.

Flour for Food

In April 1932, 31,000 barrels of federal government flour became available for distribution. Flour was given out in bulk and was baked into bread by area bakers for distribution. One man, quoted in *Steel Shavings*, remembered: "There was no such thing as stale bread in those days. We even picked the mold off and ate it. . . . I remember that we were so hungry one time that when my father brought home a bag of flour, we ripped the bag open and ate it just like that."

Other Work Relief

There were many self-help projects just as successful as the garden project.

- Flue dust from the blast furnaces had accumulated for years at the steel mill. People were allowed to scavenge approximately 30,000 tons of coke. Coal was also recovered from cinder dumps. Both were used as fuel.
- Wood for fuel could be collected from dismantled freight cars. Also, a company issued permits to family heads allowing them to cut down trees located on its property.
- There were huge deposits of peat in the Gary area. This peat was gathered and used for fuel.

A Share-the-Work program was also used that distributed the jobs available among the workers. One job could be divided between two men, who would work two-and-a-half days a week, instead of one man working five days.

Gary Post Tribune, November 25, 1931.

Gary's Needy Families Will Enjoy Thanksgiving Dinner

Relief Organizations Exert Efforts to Banish Hunger for Tomorrow; Turkey Is Promised Patients in Steel City Hospitals

The poor of Gary will dine tomorrow, the 310th anniversary of the first Thanksgiving Day.

Not all will dine, perhaps, and the chances are that many of them will not dine sumptuously.

But it remains that every welfare organization in the Steel City, and nearly every other organization which ever in its history dealt even shallowly in welfare work, is working to see that every needy person has something to eat tomorrow.

Not since 1914, when Gary suffered its last serious incursion by the specters of hunger and want, has there been such a frenzy of pre-Thanksgiving activity dedicated to holiday welfare of the lowly.

Just as they do today, charitable organizations provided the hungry with a "holiday meal" during the Depression. The Salvation Army required men to "saw and chop one railroad tie" in order to partake of their Thanksgiving feast.
Gary Post Tribune, *November 26, 1930 and November 25, 1931.*

Government Cotton and Flour Distributions in Lake County, 1932
Adapted from Riley, *Story of Unemployment . . .*

Chapter	Yards of Cotton to be Made into Garments	Number of Finished Garments Allotted	Organizations Assisting	Women and Girl Workers	Barrels of Flour Distributed and So Far Allotted	Families Receiving Flour
Hammond	45,000	9,360	76	1,200	7,000	5,500
East Chicago	40,000	8,772	60	1,000	8,006	4,720
Whiting	7,500	2,308	20	400	660	264
Gary	100,000	25,000	115	3,000	15,788	8,721
Crown Point	2,300	2,000	20	400	306	300
TOTAL	194,800	47,440	291	6,000	31,760	19,505

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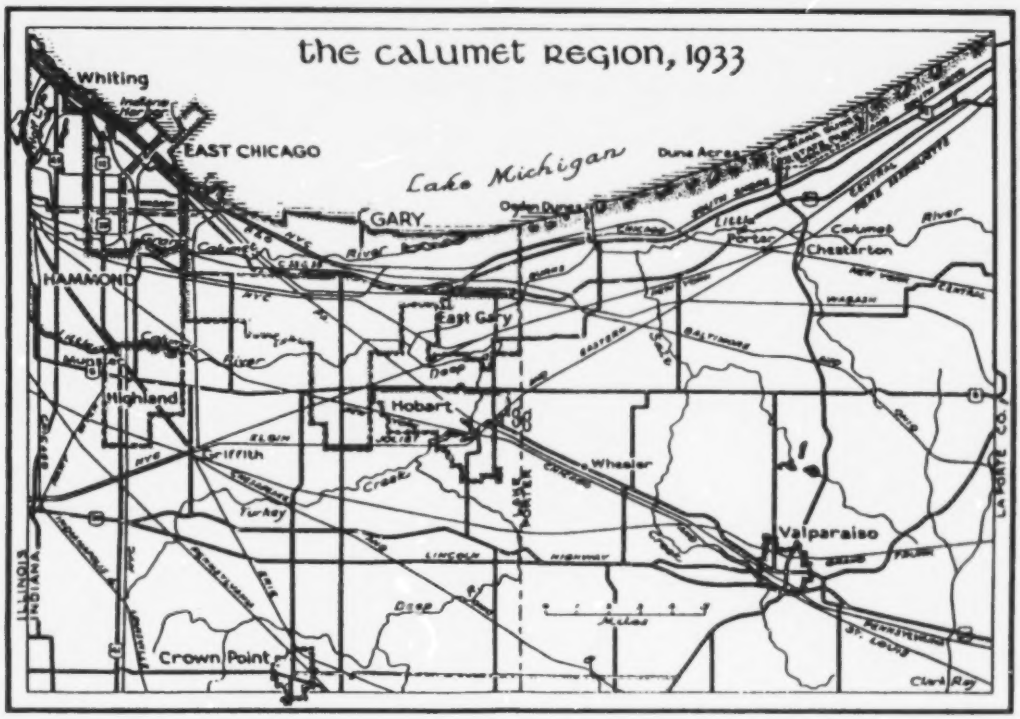

"If times were really too hard, there was a soup kitchen at 17th and Broadway which handed out flour, dried beans and bread."

Bill Hughes, Gary resident, quoted in *Steel Shavings*.

The People of Gary

Walter J. Riley ended his 1932 publication with an expression of his sincere thanks to the people of Gary and with cautious hope for the future.

"The industrial district is one of the hardest hit in the middle west. Yet despite depressed industry, closed banks and other vicissitudes our people have maintained a fine spirit. We have had countless opportunities to observe the generous impulses that move people to help one another. The situation has been accepted with a wonderful patience for the depression has been neither a respecter of the rich or the poor. Individuals and those organized, mobilized promptly and effectively to combat the depression. Like in all movements there have been shirkers, but generally the spirit of self-help has been dominant. How ready people are to help themselves is best shown by their quick response to the 1932 relief garden project, which engaged the efforts of thousands. We have the battle in hand, but our problem now is the continuance of funds to carry on."

Sources: Riley, Story of Unemployment; Steel Shavings; *Moore*, The Calumet Region; *Mohl and Betten*, Steel City.

Many relief organizations could not keep up with the growing number of people seeking help. When the money ran out, they closed their doors.
Gary Post Tribune, *July 2, 1932.*

MAYOR'S POOR RELIEF WORK IS ABANDONED

Municipal Group Disbands as Funds Give Out

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The Mexican Repatriation

Gary Post Tribune, July 9, 1932.

MEXICANS CONTINUE EXODUS FROM GARY; REPORT 3,000 GONE

Automobiles, Trains Take Families South

Two more Mexican families were started toward Mexico today in an automobile through the efforts of the Illinois Steel company's welfare organizations, according to Barney McCarthy, welfare worker for the company. About 50 indigent Mexicans have been aided to return to their homeland in the past month in this manner, McCarthy said.

The families are put in old cars, which have been put into shape without cost by local garages, and are started on their way after being provided with food, gasoline and some cash, McCarthy said. The company provides sufficient work for the men of the families planning to go, in advance of the departure of each group to assure them saving enough money to make the trip.

The Depression hurt the already poor Mexican community in Gary. Like blacks, they were among the first to be fired when mill production dropped. Whites, now out of work too, were hired for any new job openings. Soon, most Mexicans became dependent on relief from local government.

Many Mexicans, disillusioned by the hard life and bad living conditions in Gary, decided to go back to Mexico. In the late 1920s, the Mexican government had invited immigrants to come home, offering free transportation, land, and jobs. By 1930, many had left in old cars and trucks. Some even walked home.

Relief for the thousands of Mexicans still in Gary, in the form of food, clothing, and shelter, became very expensive. Resentment towards the Mexicans began to grow. Native-born Americans felt that relief money should go to U. S. citizens only. Many wanted the Mexicans to go back home.

In 1931 and early 1932, many more Mexicans left voluntarily. By mid-1932, a real movement had begun in Gary to remove all Mexicans. Reasons such as lower taxes, lower relief costs, health risks, and outright bigotry, were given.

The plan for financing the Mexican removal came from Mary Grace Wells, the Calumet Township trustee, in charge of public assistance. Since her office was nearly bankrupt, she asked local businesses to donate funds to cover the cost of removal. Businesses were given scrip, which was used to pay their taxes.

All Mexicans getting poor relief were sent back to Mexico. Mexicans who were not receiving relief, and refused to leave, faced harassment and discrimination. Thousands who went back to Mexico found there were no jobs and no suitable land. Some returned to Gary, but a large percentage remained in Mexico.

Source: Mohl and Betten, Steel City.

You be the historian!

- Were there Mexican workers in your community or area in the 1920s and 1930s? Since then?
- Are there people from Mexico—or with Mexican heritage— today in your area? In the state?
- What private and government relief—or aid—programs for the unemployed or needy exist today?
- What is the unemployment rate in your area? What factors have influenced employment in your area?

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The Rhythm of Time

Popular music reveals the many moods of a nation over time. It also can be a means of escape from the harsh realities of the times.

The 1910 song, "In My Merry Oldsmobile" spoke of the innocence and optimism of time.

Come away with me Lucile,
In my merry Oldsmobile,
Down the road of life we'll fly,
Au-to-mo-bubbling you and I,
To the church we'll swiftly steal,
Then our wedding bells will peal.

Words by Vincent Bryan, music by Gus Edwards, published and copyrighted by M. Witmark & Sons, New York, 1910.

"Over There" was a 1917 World War I song that evoked feeling of patriotism and national pride.

Johnnie get your gun, get your gun, get your gun,
Johnnie show the Hun you're a son of a gun,
Hoist the flag and let her fly, Yankee Doodle do or die,
Pack your little kit, show your grit, do your bit,
Yankees to the ranks from the towns and the tanks,
Make your mother proud of you
And the old Red, White and Blue.

By Geo. M. Cohan, published by London-Herman Darewski Music Pub. Co., copyright by Leo. Feist, Inc., New York, 1917.

The 1927 song "Blue Skies" reveals the great confidence that the nation had in the future.

Blue skies smiling at me,
Nothing but blue skies do I see,
Bluebirds singing a song,
Nothing but bluebirds all day long.

Words and music by Irving Berlin, published and copyrighted by Irving Berlin Music Corporation, New York, 1927.

Although "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?" is one of the best-known songs written about the Great Depression, its hopeless message was not typical of the music of the time. Carefree, upbeat songs such as "For Me And My Gal" allowed escape, if only temporarily, from the misery of the Depression.

The bells are ringing for me and my gal,
The birds are singing for me and my gal . . . .

Words by Edgar Leslie and E. Ray Goetz, Music by Geo. W. Meyer, published by Mills Music, Inc., copyright by Waterson, Berlin & Snyder Co., 1917, copyright 1932, Mills Music, Inc., New York.

"Happy Days Are Here Again," the 1932 campaign song used by Franklin D. Roosevelt, showed a new optimism for the future.

So long, sad times!
Go 'long, bad times!
We are rid of you at last.
Howdy, gay times!
Cloudy gray times,
You are now a thing of the past.

Words by Jack Yellen, music by Milton Ager, published and copyrighted by Advanced Music Corporation, New York, 1929.

1901	United States Steel founded.
1906	City of Gary, Indiana founded.
1910	Mexican Revolution began.
1914-1918	World War I.
1919	Gary International Institute founded.
1927	290 millionaires in the U.S.
November 7, 1928	Herbert Hoover elected president of the United States.
1929	Steel industry operating at almost 100% capacity.
1929	511 millionaires in the U. S.
October 24, 1929	"Black Thursday," U.S. Stock Market crashes.
December 1, 1929	U. S. stock market lost $26 billion by this date.
June 16, 1931	Herbert Hoover in Indianapolis.
1932	Steel industry operating at about 10-15% capacity.
May-July 1932	Bonus Expeditionary Force (World War I veterans) arrived in Washington D.C. to petition Congress for early payment of bonuses.
May, 1932	Mary Grace Wells, Calumet Township Trustee, initiated a plan for Mexican repatriation.
1932	There were at least 10 companies with 4,570 gardens totaling 561 acres in the Garden Project in Gary.
September 27, 1932	The final train load of Mexicans departed under the Calumet repatriation plan.
November 4, 1932	Herbert Hoover appears in Indiana, including Gary.
November 8, 1932	Paul V. McNutt elected governor of Indiana.
November 8, 1932	Franklin Delano Roosevelt is elected president of the United States.

Sources: Schraff, The Great Depression and the New Deal; *Edward Robb Ellis,* A Nation in Torment, the Great American Depression 1929-1939 *(New York: Coward-McCann, 1970); Moore,* The Calumet Region, *p. 569; Douglas A. Fisher,* Steel Serves the Nation 1901-1951, The Fifty Year Story of United States Steel *(New York: U.S. Steel Corporation);* Steel Shavings, *Vol. 17, 1988, p.39; Indianapolis* Star, *June 16, 1931; Indianapolis* Star, *November 4, 1932.*

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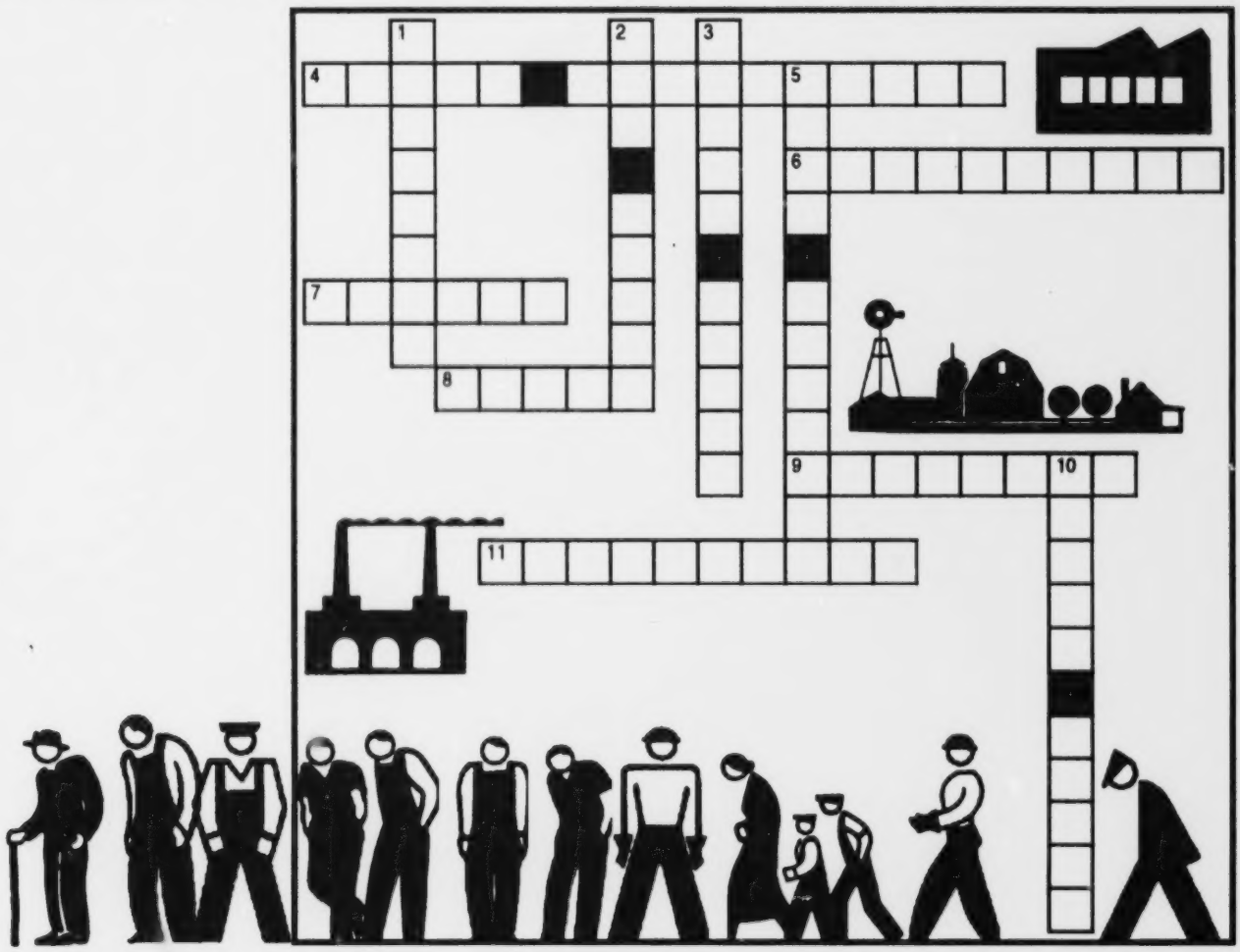
Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

4 A period of severe economic hardship beginning in 1929.
6 People who are out of work are ____.
7 Weakness caused by a lack of food.
8 Many of these institutions closed during the Great Depression.
9 Having no place to live.
11 People from other countries and other parts of the U.S. who moved to Gary to look for work

DOWN

1 People from a country south of the U. S. who were repatriated during the Depression.
2 A relief agency that made and distributed clothing during the Depression.
3 Free loaves were given away in these.
5 A place where people could get a free meal.
10 Industrial places where a special type of metal is produced.

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An Apple for Everyone

A Note Regarding Resources: Items are listed on this page that enhance work with the topic discussed. Some older items, especially, may include dated practices and ideas that are no longer generally accepted. Resources reflecting current practices are noted whenever possible.

Selected Resources

Student Reading

• Glassman, Bruce. *The Crash of '29 And The New Deal.* Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett Co., 1986.

This easy-to-read book includes good background information for the Depression and excellent photographs. The index is limited.

• Katz, William Loren. *An Album of the Great Depression.* New York: Franklin Watts, 1978.

Each topic is labeled giving this book an easy-to-use format for young readers. There are numerous photographs to give the reader a visual picture of the time.

• Schraff, Anne E. *The Great Depression and the New Deal: America's Economic Collapse And Recovery.* New York: Franklin Watts, 1990.

This is an excellent history for advanced and adult readers. The author includes a good bibliography, timeline, footnotes, and index.

General Sources

• Garraty, John A. *The Great Depression.* San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986.

This book provides an inquiry into the Great Depression on a worldwide scale. Viewpoints include both contempories and present-day historians.

• Lane, James B. *"City of The Century": A History of Gary, Indiana.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.

This book is a general introduction to Gary's history with special emphasis on individuals, both ordinary and famous, who are a part of Gary's story.

• Lane, James B., and Ronald D. Cohen. *Gary, Indiana: A Pictorial History.* Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company Publishers, 1983.

This work provides an excellent visual resource of Gary from 1906 to 1981.

• McElvaine, Robert S. *The Great Depression.* New York: Times Books, 1984.

This book concentrates on the Great Depression in the United States. It provides some social and cultural history of the time, and also, provides some comparisons to the 1980s.

• Mohl, Raymond A., and Neil Betten. *Steel City: Urban and Ethnic Patterns in Gary, Indiana, 1906-1950.* New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986.

This is an excellent resource on the ethnic populations of Gary.

• Moore, Powell A. *The Calumet Region.* Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1959.

This book provides a history of the Calumet Region from its beginning to the close of 1933, including economic, social, and cultural as well as political affairs.

• Riley, Walter J. *The Story of Unemployment Relief Work in Lake County, Indiana,* 1932.

A concise, easy-to-read report on the massive 1932 relief effort in Lake County.

• Señoras of Yesteryear. *Mexican American Harbor Lights.* [Indiana Harbor]: Señoras of Yesteryear, 1992.

This book provides interesting information on Mexicans in the Calumet Region.

• *Steel Shavings,* Vol. 3, 1977.

This issue is titled *Families of the Calumet Region During the Depression of the 1930s.* This useful periodical is published by Indiana University Northwest, Gary.

Of Special Interest

The Indiana Humanities Council has materials on the Great Depression in their Resource Center. Several are listed below. Call 317-638-1500.

- *Making a Better Indiana: WPA, Labor and Leisure.* 26 minute slide tape.
- *America Lost and Found.* 58 minute video.
- *Artists at Work: A Film on New Deal Art Projects.* 35 minute VHS tape.
- "Steelmaker/Steeltown." Exhibit with 10 minute video.
- "Back Home Again: FSA Photographers in Indiana, 1935-1943." Exhibit.

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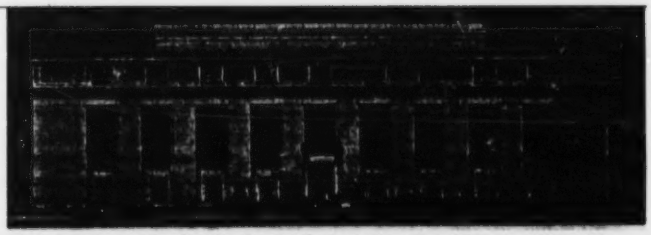

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